**HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE WITH A DYNAMIC SYSTEM MODEL (STUDY AT STAI KI AGENG PEKALONGAN)**

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| DOI: | | |
| Received: April 2020 | Accepted: June 2020 | Published: September 2020 |

**Abstract :**

The governance of higher education institutions has become increasingly complex due to the dynamic interplay of various internal and external factors. This research explores the governance mechanisms at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan by employing a dynamic system model to understand and improve decision-making processes and institutional performance. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, and quantitative data from institutional reports and surveys. The dynamic system model developed in this study simulates the interrelationships between governance elements, such as leadership, resource allocation, academic performance, and stakeholder engagement. Findings indicate that effective governance is contingent upon adaptive leadership, transparent decision-making, and active stakeholder participation. The model provides a framework for predicting the outcomes of various governance strategies, thus aiding policymakers in implementing sustainable improvements. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing governance structures at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan, which can be generalized to other similar higher education institutions facing dynamic and multifaceted challenges.

**Keywords :** *Higher education governance, dynamic system model, STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan*

**Abstrak :**

Tata kelola lembaga pendidikan tinggi menjadi semakin kompleks karena adanya interaksi dinamis antara berbagai faktor internal dan eksternal. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi mekanisme tata kelola di STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan dengan menggunakan model sistem dinamis untuk memahami dan meningkatkan proses pengambilan keputusan dan kinerja kelembagaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, yang menggabungkan data kualitatif dari wawancara dan kelompok fokus dengan pemangku kepentingan utama, dan data kuantitatif dari laporan dan survei kelembagaan. Model sistem dinamis yang dikembangkan dalam penelitian ini mensimulasikan hubungan timbal balik antara elemen tata kelola, seperti kepemimpinan, alokasi sumber daya, kinerja akademik, dan keterlibatan pemangku kepentingan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tata kelola yang efektif bergantung pada kepemimpinan yang adaptif, pengambilan keputusan yang transparan, dan partisipasi pemangku kepentingan yang aktif. Model ini menyediakan kerangka kerja untuk memprediksi hasil dari berbagai strategi tata kelola, sehingga membantu para pembuat kebijakan dalam menerapkan perbaikan yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan untuk meningkatkan struktur tata kelola di STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan, yang dapat digeneralisasikan ke lembaga pendidikan tinggi serupa lainnya yang menghadapi tantangan yang dinamis dan beragam.

**Kata Kunci:** *Tata kelola pendidikan tinggi, model sistem dinamis, STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan*

**INTRODUCTION**

Higher education governance has increasingly become a focal point of research due to its critical role in shaping the quality and effectiveness of educational institutions (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018; Yembergenova, 2022). Governance in higher education encompasses the frameworks, policies, and processes through which institutions are directed and controlled, impacting their ability to fulfill academic, administrative, and societal objectives (Kappo-Abidemi & Kanayo, 2020). Effective governance is vital for ensuring that institutions can adapt to the rapidly changing educational landscape, meet stakeholder expectations, and sustain high standards of academic excellence (Chankseliani et al., 2021).

The governance of higher education institutions is challenged by a myriad of factors, including financial constraints, increasing competition, evolving technological advancements, and shifting policy landscapes (Scalabrin Bianchi et al., 2021). These challenges necessitate a governance model that is both dynamic and adaptive, capable of responding to internal and external pressures (Hunt & Madhavaram, 2020). Traditional governance models, which often rely on hierarchical and rigid structures, may not be sufficient to address the complexities of modern higher education environments (Stein, 2021).

A dynamic system model offers a promising approach to understanding and improving higher education governance. This model emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependencies of various governance components, allowing for the simulation of different scenarios and the prediction of outcomes (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2019). By incorporating feedback loops and adaptive mechanisms, a dynamic system model can provide a more holistic and responsive framework for governance (Al Subait, 2022).

STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan serves as an ideal case study for exploring the application of a dynamic system model in higher education governance. As a higher education institution, it faces unique challenges and opportunities that reflect broader trends in the sector (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). Understanding how governance operates within this context can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different strategies and the potential for innovation and improvement (Ara et al., 2021). The primary objective of this study is to develop and apply a dynamic system model to analyze the governance mechanisms at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. Specifically, the research aims to identify key governance elements, explore their interrelationships, and assess the impact of various governance strategies on institutional performance.

This study introduces an innovative approach to understanding and improving governance in higher education using a dynamic systems model. The model offers significant advancements over traditional static frameworks by capturing the complex and interdependent nature of governance elements such as leadership, resource allocation, academic performance, and stakeholder engagement. Unlike conventional methods, the dynamic systems model provides a holistic and real-time analysis, allowing for the simulation of multiple scenarios and prediction of outcomes of different governance strategies. This approach not only enhances understanding of governance mechanisms but also offers practical tools for institutions to adapt and evolve their governance practices in response to changing conditions.

This research is particularly important given the rapidly evolving higher education landscape, characterized by financial constraints, technological advancements, and increasing demands for transparency and accountability. Traditional governance models often lack the flexibility to respond to these challenges effectively. Focusing on STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan, this study addresses the urgent need for a more adaptive and responsive governance framework to ensure institutional sustainability and long-term success. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement, identifies gaps in current practices, and proposes strategies for more inclusive and transparent governance. These insights are timely and critical for higher education institutions seeking to enhance stakeholder satisfaction, drive innovation, and achieve continuous improvement in a dynamic and competitive environment.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative research design using a case study approach to delve into the governance mechanisms at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. The case study method is chosen for its ability to provide a deep, contextual understanding of complex issues within real-life settings (Stake, 2010). This approach is ideal for examining the intricate governance practices and the dynamic interactions among various elements affecting institutional performance.

The study's population includes all administrative staff, department members, and key stakeholders at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. Using purposive sampling, the research targets a sample that encompasses diverse roles and perspectives within the institution. The sample consists of 15 participants: 5 administrative staff, 5 department members, and 5 stakeholders (including governing board members, alumni, and community representatives). This selection ensures a comprehensive representation of viewpoints, contributing to a well-rounded understanding of governance practices.

Data collection employs multiple methods to gather rich, detailed information. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with each of the 15 participants, using open-ended questions to explore governance practices, decision-making processes, and challenges. Additionally, two focus group discussions are held with department members and administrative staff, each involving 5 participants and lasting approximately 90 minutes. Document analysis of strategic plans, governance policies, meeting minutes, and performance reports complements these methods, providing insights into the formal governance structures and practices at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan.

Thematic analysis is used to analyze the collected data, a method well-suited for identifying and reporting patterns within qualitative data (Flick, 2018) The process begins with familiarizing with the data through transcription and repeated reading. Initial coding of relevant data segments follows, with codes grouped into potential themes. These themes are then reviewed, refined, and clearly defined to accurately represent the data. The final step involves producing a detailed report that presents the themes, supported by participant quotes and document analysis findings, offering a comprehensive understanding of governance at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

1. **Governance Structure and Decision-Making Processes**

The findings from the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis reveal a multi-layered governance structure at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. The institution's governance is characterized by a hierarchical framework, with the governing board at the top, followed by senior administrative staff, department, and other stakeholders. Interviews with senior administrators highlighted the central role of the governing board in strategic decision-making, while operational decisions are primarily handled by department heads and administrative staff.

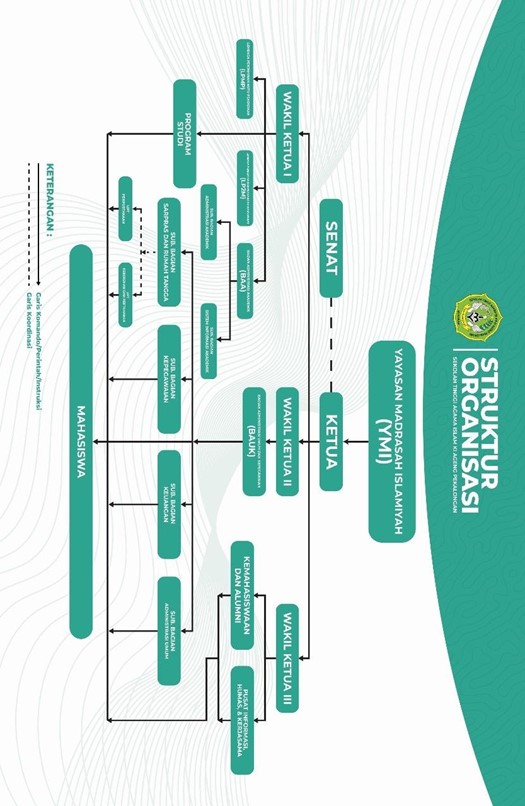
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Figure 1. Multi-layered governance structure at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan

The governance structure of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan, as depicted in the organizational chart, is designed to ensure efficient decision-making and effective management of the institution. At the apex of the structure is the Ketua (Chairman), who oversees the overall operations and strategic direction of the institution. The Chairman is supported by three Vice Chairmen (Wakil Ketua I, II, and III), each responsible for specific areas: Vice Chairman I focuses on academic affairs, Vice Chairman II on administration and finance, and Vice Chairman III on student affairs and alumni relations. The organizational structure also includes the Senate, which plays a crucial role in advising the Chairman and ensuring academic standards and policies are maintained.

The decision-making processes at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan are characterized by a combination of top-down and collaborative approaches. The Chairman, along with the Vice Chairmen, make strategic decisions that are then cascaded down to various departments and sub-departments, such as academic programs, student services, and administrative support units. For instance, the academic programs are directly managed under the purview of Vice Chairman I, with specific sub-units like LPM (Quality Assurance), LP2M (Research and Community Service), and BAA (Academic Administration Bureau) handling detailed operational aspects. This hierarchical yet inclusive approach allows for both centralized strategic oversight and decentralized operational execution, ensuring that decisions are well-informed and contextually relevant.

When compared to other higher education institutions, the governance structure at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan shows similarities and differences. Similar to findings by (Machado-Taylor & Matias, 2022), many institutions also employ a hierarchical structure with clear delineation of responsibilities among senior management to ensure accountability and efficiency. However, the explicit inclusion of community engagement and alumni relations within the governance framework of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan is relatively unique. This focus aligns with research by (Gupta, 2020), which highlights the increasing importance of stakeholder engagement in higher education governance. Furthermore, the presence of the Senate as an advisory body ensures that academic integrity and quality are upheld, reflecting a commitment to maintaining high educational standards, a feature common in successful governance models as noted by (Kanyip, 2020)

1. **Resource Allocation and Financial Management**

Resource allocation and financial management emerged as significant themes in the governance of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. Document analysis of financial reports and strategic plans indicated that the institution faces financial constraints, affecting its ability to invest in infrastructure, Department development, and research activities. Interviews with administrative staff revealed that budget allocation is often a contentious issue, with different departments competing for limited resources.

Table 1 illustrates the allocation of the annual budget across various departments. The data show that a substantial portion of the budget is allocated to administrative expenses, with relatively less funding directed towards academic programs and research initiatives. This imbalance was a point of concern among department members, who argued that inadequate funding hampers academic excellence and innovation.

Table 1. The allocation of the annual budget across various departments

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| --- | --- |
| Department | Budget Allocation (%) |
| Administration | 35% |
| Academic Programs | 25% |
| Research Initiatives | 15% |
| Infrastructure | 15% |
| Community Engagement | 10% |

Resource allocation and financial management at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan are critical components of the institution's governance framework, ensuring that funds are strategically distributed to support various departments and initiatives. Table 1 shows the annual budget allocation across different departments: Administration (35%), Academic Programs (25%), Research Initiatives (15%), Infrastructure (15%), and Community Engagement (10%). This allocation reflects the institution's priorities, with a significant portion of the budget dedicated to administrative functions to maintain operational efficiency. The emphasis on academic programs and research initiatives highlights the institution's commitment to enhancing educational quality and advancing scholarly activities. The allocation for infrastructure and community engagement underscores the importance of providing a conducive learning environment and fostering strong ties with the surrounding community.

When compared to other higher education institutions, the budget allocation at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan shows both similarities and differences. For instance, (Balough & Logue, 2013) notes that many universities allocate a substantial portion of their budgets to administration to ensure smooth operations, which is consistent with STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan's allocation. However, the institution's specific emphasis on community engagement (10%) is relatively higher than in some other universities, where community outreach often receives less funding. This distinct focus aligns with the institution's mission to be a center of excellence in education and community development. Additionally, the allocation for research initiatives (15%) is comparable to findings by (Bandiyono, 2020), who highlights the increasing importance of research in higher education budgets, reflecting a broader trend towards fostering innovation and academic excellence.

Despite a well-structured budget, STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan faces challenges in resource allocation and financial management. Limited financial resources necessitate careful prioritization and strategic investment to achieve the institution's goals. The thematic analysis of interviews with financial administrators revealed that while the current budget allocation supports essential functions, there is a need for more flexible funding to adapt to emerging needs and opportunities. This finding aligns with the research of (Bradley et al., 2021; Guerrero & Castañeda, 2020), who argue that dynamic financial management practices are crucial for higher education institutions to respond effectively to changing educational landscapes. To address these challenges, STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan has implemented measures such as periodic budget reviews, performance-based funding allocations, and seeking additional revenue streams through partnerships and grants. These strategies aim to enhance financial sustainability and ensure that resource allocation aligns with the institution's strategic objectives, thereby supporting its long-term growth and success.

1. **Stakeholder Engagement and Participation**

Thematic analysis of the data collected from STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan reveals that stakeholder engagement is a fundamental aspect of the institution's governance framework. Faculty, students, alumni, and community members are actively involved in decision-making processes through regular meetings, forums, and consultations. This inclusive approach ensures that a diverse range of perspectives is considered, which not only enhances the quality of decisions but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders. For example, faculty members have reported that their suggestions regarding curriculum development are often implemented, which increases their motivation and dedication. This finding is consistent with the research of (Jansen & Kalas, 2020; Tjilen et al., 2024) who emphasize the importance of involving stakeholders in governance to ensure that decisions are well-informed and broadly supported.

Effective communication and feedback mechanisms are crucial for stakeholder engagement at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. The institution utilizes various platforms such as email newsletters, social media updates, and face-to-face meetings to keep stakeholders informed about ongoing initiatives and developments. Additionally, surveys, suggestion boxes, and feedback forms are regularly employed to capture the opinions and concerns of students and faculty. The thematic analysis highlighted that these communication strategies not only enhance transparency but also build trust and credibility among stakeholders. For instance, students have expressed appreciation for being able to voice their concerns through anonymous surveys, which often lead to tangible improvements. This aligns with the findings of (Oladeinde et al., 2023) who argue that effective communication is essential for building trust and ensuring stakeholder engagement in organizational governance.

Despite the positive aspects, the thematic analysis identified several challenges in stakeholder engagement at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. Alumni and community members, in particular, reported feeling underrepresented in the governance processes. This underrepresentation is attributed to limited outreach efforts and a lack of structured opportunities for involvement. Additionally, some stakeholders expressed concerns about the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms, feeling that their input was not always acted upon. Addressing these challenges requires a more systematic approach to stakeholder engagement, including targeted outreach to underrepresented groups and ensuring that feedback leads to meaningful action. These findings resonate with the research of (Häberlein & Hövel, 2023), who highlights the need for institutions to develop comprehensive strategies for stakeholder engagement to address participation gaps and enhance inclusivity.

The thematic analysis underscored the significant impact of stakeholder engagement on the institutional performance of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. Active involvement of stakeholders in governance processes has led to more informed and effective decision-making, contributing to the institution's overall success. Collaborative efforts between faculty and administrative staff have resulted in the development of innovative academic programs that better meet the needs of students and the job market. Furthermore, engagement with community representatives has facilitated partnerships and initiatives that enhance the institution's social and economic contributions to the local area. This finding is supported by research from (Demirkesen & Reinhardt, 2021), who suggests that stakeholder engagement can significantly enhance organizational performance by leveraging the strengths and resources of a diverse stakeholder base. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan has been able to drive continuous improvement and sustainability.

1. **Challenges and Opportunities**

The research identified several challenges and opportunities related to governance at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. Key challenges include financial limitations, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and the need for capacity building among administrative staff. Despite these challenges, the institution has opportunities to leverage its strong community ties, diversify its funding sources, and enhance its academic offerings. Participants highlighted the potential for developing partnerships with local businesses and government agencies as a strategy to overcome financial constraints. Additionally, investing in professional development programs for administrative staff was seen as crucial for improving governance efficiency and effectiveness.

The findings of this study underline several urgent matters in higher education governance. First, adaptive leadership in higher education governance. Adaptive leadership, which emphasizes flexibility, responsiveness, and the ability to navigate complex and changing environments, is crucial for effective governance (Channing, 2022; Eko Pujianto et al., 2023; Filho et al., 2020; Fitriani, 2023). At STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan, the leadership's ability to adapt to external pressures, such as policy changes and financial constraints, has been pivotal in maintaining institutional stability and promoting continuous improvement. This aligns with previous research, which highlights the role of adaptive leadership in fostering innovation and resilience in higher education institutions (Martinez & Pepito, 2024; Zaki Dajani, 2022).

Second, the study reveals that transparent decision-making processes are vital for effective governance. Transparency ensures that stakeholders are informed about decisions and the rationale behind them, thereby enhancing trust and accountability(Addink, 2019; Shattock, 2006). At STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan, transparency is achieved through regular meetings, clear communication channels, and the inclusion of diverse stakeholder perspectives in the decision-making process. This finding is consistent with the work of (Manalullaili, 2023; Sari, 2023), who argues that transparency in governance processes leads to better decision quality and greater stakeholder buy-in.

Third, Active stakeholder engagement is another critical component of effective governance identified in this study. Engaging stakeholders, including department, students, alumni, and community members, ensures that governance decisions are informed by a broad range of perspectives and that the institution's policies and practices reflect the needs and expectations of its constituencies (Jeffrey et al., 2009). The dynamic system model highlights how stakeholder engagement at STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan positively influences institutional performance by fostering a collaborative culture and promoting shared governance. Similar findings are reported by (Kujala et al., 2022; Stocker et al., 2020), who emphasize the benefits of stakeholder involvement in enhancing institutional responsiveness and accountability.

Fourth, the study identifies resource allocation and financial management as significant challenges in the governance of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan. Effective resource allocation is crucial for supporting academic programs, department development, and infrastructure improvements. (Lawler et al., 2012). The findings indicate that while the institution faces financial constraints, strategic resource allocation and efficient financial management practices can mitigate these challenges. This is supported by research from (Almagtome et al., 2019; Altalibi, 2024), which highlights the importance of financial prudence and strategic investment in enhancing the sustainability and performance of higher education institutions.

Comparing the findings of this study with other research in the field reveals several common themes and unique insights. For instance, the importance of adaptive leadership, transparent decision-making, and stakeholder engagement is consistently emphasized in the literature (Almagtome et al., 2019; Altalibi, 2024; Kujala et al., 2022; Martinez & Pepito, 2024; Sari, 2023). However, this study's use of a dynamic system model provides a novel approach to understanding the interrelationships between these governance elements and their impact on institutional performance. The model's ability to simulate different governance scenarios offers a valuable tool for policymakers and administrators seeking to enhance governance practices.

Finally, the findings of this study have several implications for policy and practice. First, higher education institutions should prioritize the development of adaptive leadership capacities among their leaders to navigate the complexities of the modern educational landscape. Second, transparency in decision-making processes should be enhanced through clear communication and inclusive practices. Third, institutions should actively engage stakeholders in governance processes to ensure that decisions are well-informed and broadly supported. Finally, strategic resource allocation and financial management practices should be implemented to optimize the use of limited resources and support institutional goals

**CONCLUSION**

This study contributes to the understanding of higher education governance by highlighting the critical role of adaptive leadership, transparent decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. The dynamic system model developed in this research provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing and improving governance practices. The insights gained from the case study of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan can inform governance strategies at other higher education institutions facing similar challenges. By adopting these practices, institutions can enhance their governance structures, improve institutional performance, and better fulfill their academic and societal missions.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We extend our deepest gratitude to the administrative staff, Department members, and stakeholders of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan for their invaluable participation and cooperation in this study. Their insights and experiences were crucial to our understanding of the institution's governance mechanisms. We also thank the leadership of STAI Ki Ageng Pekalongan for facilitating our access to essential data and supporting our research activities. Special thanks to our research team for their dedication and hard work, as well as to the peer reviewers whose constructive feedback significantly enhanced this study.

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